

NPL Factsheets for Wisconsin:

SHEBOYGAN HARBOR & RIVER

EPA REGION 5

Sheboygan County
55 miles north of Milwaukee

EPA ID# WID980996367

9th Congressional District

Last Update: February 2002

Site Description

The Sheboygan Harbor & River site extends approximately fourteen miles through the communities of Sheboygan Falls, Kohler, and Sheboygan, Wisconsin. The site area includes Sheboygan Harbor, located on Lake Michigan, and the lower Sheboygan River, which discharges into the Sheboygan Harbor. In 1977, the state of Wisconsin detected polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) during routine sampling of fish. Since then, PCBs have been detected in fish, wildlife, surface water, sediments in the harbor and river and in flood plain soils. The highest concentrations of PCBs have been detected in sediments immediately downstream from a die-casting plant in Sheboygan Falls. Concentrations decline farther downstream from the plant. The potentially responsible party (PRP) excavated PCB- contaminated soils from its property along the river and disposed of them off-site in 1978. The Sheboygan River drains into Lake Michigan, the source of drinking water for approximately 58,000 people within the Sheboygan/Sheboygan Falls/Kohler metropolitan area.

Site Responsibility: This site is being addressed through Federal, State, and potentially responsible parties' actions.

NPL Listing History: Proposed Date: 09/18/85
Final Date: 06/10/86

Threats and Contaminants

Sediments are contaminated with PCBs and a wide variety of heavy metals. Soils and surface water are contaminated with PCBs and heavy metals including arsenic, chromium, copper, lead, and zinc. People who come into direct contact with or ingest contaminated soil, sediments, or surface water may be at risk. Because fish and wildlife are contaminated with PCBs, people who eat contaminated fish or waterfowl also may suffer adverse health effects. In 1978, the State advised residents not to eat fish from the Sheboygan River and two tributaries, the Mullet and Onion Rivers, because of PCB contamination. In 1987, the state also issued an advisory not to eat wildlife from the area. The advisories are still in effect.

Cleanup Progress

In 1986, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and the State signed a Consent Order with the PRP, requiring the PRP to conduct an investigation at the site to determine the nature and extent of contamination. Investigative studies were concluded in 1996. Currently, cleanup options for the entire river are being evaluated. A final cleanup decision is expected by December 1998.

From 1989 to 1990, the PRP dredged approximately 5,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediments from the upper Sheboygan River. The PRP has stored the sediments in two containers on-site: a confined treatment facility (CTF) and a sediment management facility (SMF). The CTF is being used for biodegradation studies to evaluate the feasibility of biodegradation of PCBs in place. The SMF is designed for temporary storage of the remaining dredged sediments until they can be disposed of properly. During the period between

1989 and 1990, eight other sediment deposits were "armored" in the upper Sheboygan River. These areas were covered with several layers of geotextile fabric, run of bank material, cobble and wire cages filled with rock (gabions) in order to prevent the PCB-contaminated sediment from moving downstream.

The ROD was signed on May 12, 2000, which calls for the removal of approximately 21,000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated sediment from the upper river, 50,000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated sediment from the inner harbor, removal of PCB-contaminated soil from the floodplains adjacent to the river, long-term monitoring of sediment and fish for the entire river, and additional groundwater/preferential pathway/source investigations at the Tecumseh plant facility. The estimated cost of the remedy is \$41 million. A Consent Decree with Tecumseh Product Company for development of the remedial design and implementation of the remedial action for the upper river sediment, floodplain soil and facility investigations are expected to be signed in the winter of 2001.

In the fall of 2001, Tecumseh Products Company, under a separate agreement, disposed of approximately 3,800 cubic yard of PCB-contaminated sediment that had been stored in the CTF and SMF. Off-site removal and disposal of these stored sediments was one of the components of the ROD signed in May of 2000.

Contacts

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